

March 22, 2006

The Honorable Bob Ney, Chairman
Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity
U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Testimony for the Field Hearing on “Strengthening Rural Ohio: A Review of the Community Development Block Grant Program” Friday, March 24, 2006, Knox County Commissioners Hearing Room, 117 East High Street, Suite 161, Mount Vernon, Ohio

Dear Chairman Ney:

I would like to address Formula Community Development Block Grants first. We, in Knox County, Ohio, have appreciated the flexibility of the Formula Program. We have used these dollars to bring buildings into American Disability Act (ADA) Compliance. Without these funds being available, some of the political subdivisions would not have been able to complete these much needed and mandated improvements. We have also used these dollars to complete projects such as parks and improvements; sidewalks; storm water drainage; Domestic Abuse Shelter improvements; substance abuse facility. All of these improvements are benefiting low-moderate income members of our community.

The next area of testimony I wish to speak upon is the county’s Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) grant funds. My favorite component of CHIP is the same as the President’s, to expand homeownership and opportunity. Other components Knox County utilizes under the CHIP program is to provide funding for Habitat for Humanity projects and other “bricks and mortar” projects such as water and sewer to unserved/low-income communities.

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In conclusion, Knox County has appreciated the CDBG programs. We recognize the need to be fiscally responsible. If budget cuts must be made, please save the flexibility and “bricks and mortar” components of the program.

I appreciate this opportunity you have granted Knox County in testifying at this hearing.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF KNOX COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

Allen Stockberger, President

AS/rs